Philosophy 4: Intro. To Ethics — November 7, 2008
Handout #5: Kant — Prof. Aaron Zimmerman

1. The Preface

(a) A Threefold Division:
(a) Physics: A description of the behavior of physical systems. As the observed behavior of the universe is (somewhat) uniform, these descriptions can be (more or less) general in form. This enables prediction. (Kant thinks much of this uniformity comes from us and the way our minds are set up.)
(b) Logic: Rules for Thought. Logic has nothing to do with actual objects. Its laws hold regardless of what exists. (Although classical logic assumes that at least one thing exists—what we now call classical logic didn't yet exist when Kant wrote.)
(c) Ethics: Rules for action. Just as logic tells us how to reason, ethics should tell us what to do (or **will**).

Kant claims that Physics and Ethics will have two parts to it: (1) an entirely formal part that can be known **a priori**; and (2) an **empirical** part that takes into account facts about human and physical nature and uses these facts to come up with more specific descriptions and generalizations.

(b) A priori vs. A posteriori

A priori: S knows P a priori if and only if S's justification for believing P (i.e. her reason for thinking P is true) does not concern S's sense experience.
A posteriori: S knows P a posteriori if and only if S's justification for believing P ultimately concerns S's sense experience.

In saying that the most fundamental laws of morality can be known a priori, Kant is saying that they have nothing to do with anthropology and the study of human nature. The basic ethic laws should bind rational creatures with wildly different natures (e.g., aliens, angels and God) as much as humans.

Examples: (1a) It is wrong to act with the purpose of harming another.
(1b) It is wrong to act with the purpose of burning another.

Both are true, but to know the truth of (b) you need to know that *burning harms people*, which is a piece of a posteriori knowledge. (You believe that pain harms people because you have **felt** the pain of a burn or you have **seen** the damage that burning causes. Your justification for believing pain harms people is that you have, say, seen burns, and seen the damage they cause.)

Kant would claim you don't need to know anything about the empirical facts about how humans are constructed to know that (a) is true. Suppose there is an alien species that thrives when it is burned— with each burning it regenerates itself, and gains in strength, intelligence and beauty. It would not be wrong to burn an alien of this sort. This shows that to know that it is wrong to burn an X one must know something about the nature of Xs. But it would still be wrong to **harm** that alien or to act with the aim of harming him; so perhaps our knowledge that it is wrong to harm another being does not rest on empirical investigation, but is instead a priori. (Can you come up with an example of a kind of thing it would not be wrong to harm?)

Kant's example: "'You ought not lie,' is valid not merely for human beings, as though other rational beings did not have to heed it; and likewise all other genuinely moral laws; hence that the ground of obligation here is to be sought not in the nature of the human being or the circumstances of the world in which he is placed, but a priori solely in concepts of pure reason, and that every other precept grounded on principles of mere experience, and even a precept that is universal in a certain aspect, insofar as it is supported in the smallest part on empirical grounds, perhaps only as to its motive, can be called a **practical rule**, but never a **moral law**." (p. 5).

Question: Is "You ought not lie," more like "Do not harm another," or more like "Do not burn another"? Can you imagine an alien creature if would be okay to lie to?

2. Empirical Ethics

Kant says there are two things for which we need the empirical part of ethics: (a) applying laws to instances, and (b) overcoming inclinations.

(1) Example of (a): You might know (a priori) that it is wrong to harm another person, but if you don't realize that you have mono and that kissing S will make S sick, you can't use you're a priori knowledge of the wrongness of harm to stop you from kissing S.
(2) Example of (b): Suppose alcoholism is partly genetic in origin. And suppose you know that it is true that it is okay to drink a moderate amount of alcohol but morally wrong to waste your life and talents by becoming an alcoholic. (Kant certainly thought this.) Still, if you don't know about your innate inclination to be overcome by an addictive desire for alcohol, you may not be able to use you're a priori moral knowledge to stay away from the drink altogether.

3. First Section: Transition from Common Sense Morality to Genuine Moral Knowledge

(1) The Good Will Claim 1: "There is nothing it is possible to think of anywhere in the world, or indeed anything outside it, that can be held to be good without limitation, excepting only a good will" (p. 9).

(2) Three Questions: (a) What is the will? (b) Why aren't there other things that are good without limitation? (c) What makes a will good?

The will must be distinguished from "the talents of the mind": understanding, wit, and intelligence.

The will must be distinguished from what Kant calls "temperament": courage, *resolve*, and heroism.

Answer to (a): The will is the making of plans and decisions, the adoption of policies, or (in Kant's language) **the setting of ends**.
Answer to (b): Pleasant or admirable talents and temperaments can be used for evil, so too can fortune, wealth and honor. And when someone has these gifts but does not deserve them this is unjust and bad.

What about happiness? According to Kant, happiness is not good without limitation because: (i) it isn't good when a bad person is happy, and (ii) happiness can lead to arrogance and it isn't good when it does this. Moreover, Kant argues, we can see that the end or goal of human life cannot be happiness with the following argument.

4. The Teleological Argument

The teleological argument:
(1) Everything has a purpose or proper function.
(2) The good for a kind of thing is given by its end or purpose: it is good for a thing to fulfill its purpose.
(3) The proper function of people cannot be living in happiness because we are poorly designed for this. We have reason and will, and happiness is better achieved by inclination and instinct.
Therefore,
(4) There must be something good about reason and will themselves—any end outside them is better reached by an automatic mechanism (e.g. inclination or instinct) set up to achieve them.
Therefore,
(5) The end or proper function of all people (indeed, all rational agents) is the development and use of reason and will.
Therefore,
(6) The will is good in itself and happiness is not.

Oh, and by the way, it's really good: "Even if through the peculiar disfavor of fate, or through the meager endowment of a stepmotherly nature, this will were entirely lacking in the resources to carry out its aim, if with its greatest effort nothing of it were accomplished, and only the good will were left over (to be sure, not a mere wish,

but as the summoning up of all the means insofar as they are in our control): then it would shine like a jewel for itself, as something that has its full worth in itself." (p. 10). Virtue in rags is virtue nonetheless.

5. The Good Will

We now turn to question (c): What makes a good will good? How can we tell a good will from a bad one?

Claim 2: A good will is a will that acts *from* duty.

"We put before ourselves the concept of duty, which contains that of a good will, though under certain subjective limitations and hindrances [Kant here intends to contrast our wills with the will of God] which, however, far from concealing it and making it unrecognizable, rather elevate it by contrast and let it shine forth all the more brightly" (p. 13).

Four Kinds of Willing
(1) Acts done contrary to duty
(2) Acts done in accordance with duty for an ulterior (non-moral) motive.
(3) Acts done in accordance with duty from benevolent inclination.
(4) Acts done from duty (i.e. respect for the moral law).

Willing of the first type obviously isn't good.
Example of (2): The Prudent Shopkeeper.
Example of (3): The Benevolent Shopkeeper.
Example of (4): The Miserable Wretch.

The important distinction: actions done **in conformity with duty** vs. actions done **from duty**. "To be beneficent where one can is a duty, and besides this there are some souls so sympathetically attuned that, even without any other motive of vanity or utility to self, take an inner gratification in spreading joy around them, and can take delight in the contentment of others insofar as it is their own work. But I assert that in such a case the action, however it may conform to duty and however amiable it is, nevertheless has no true moral worth, but is on the same footing as other inclinations. . . Thus suppose the mind of that same friend of humanity were clouded over with his own grief, extinguishing all his sympathetic participation in the fate of others; he still has the resources to be beneficent to those suffering distress, but the distress of others does not touch him because he is sufficiently busy with his own; and now, where no inclination any longer stimulates him to it, he tears himself out of this deadly insensibility and does the action without any inclination, solely from duty; only then does it for the first time have its authentic moral worth" (p. 14).

Two interpretations:

Actual: S's act A has moral worth if and only if S recognizes that A is her duty and S does A in the absence of any inclination to A (and, perhaps, in the presence of an inclination to not A).

Counterfactual: S's act A has moral worth if and only S recognizes that A is her duty and either S has no inclination to A or S does have an inclination to A, but S would have performed A even if she had no such inclination.

6. Respect for the Moral Law

Claim 3: Actions that are done from duty derive their moral worth from the **maxim** or policy that leads a person to try to perform them; they do not derive their worth from (a) successful completion or (b) any desired end.

A Difficult Distinction: Acting from **desire** vs. Acting from **respect for the moral law**.

What is respect? (See Kant's discussion)

(a) John is happy.

(b) If John is happy, his mother is happy.
Therefore,
(c) John's mother is happy.

Suppose you believe (a) and you believe (b); then, insofar as you're rational you'll feel compelled to believe (c). (If you don't believe (c) you'll have to stop believing (a) or (b).) The inference rule you follow when you come to believe (c) on the basis of (a) and (b) is called "modus ponens".

Now it isn't only if you **want** to follow modus ponens that you'll feel compelled to believe (c). You at once feel **forced** to believe (c) and understand that this is **how things must be**—that it would be irrational to proceed in any other way regardless of your desires. This, I think, is what Kant would think of as **respect** for a law of thought. It is close, I think, to what Kant means by "respect" for the moral law. You might just feel compelled or forced to follow the moral law, and you just might have a desire (or inclination) to do so, but respect for the moral law is supposed, by Kant to be a mixture of these two things. (It's like both and like neither—see the note on p. 17.) You can't **help but** follow the laws of logic (when you recognize them) but you see that this is a **good and rational thing**—it would be incoherent to do anything but follow them. One has a similar attitude to the moral law when one acts out of respect for it, and so acts out of duty. "As a law we are subject to [the moral law] without asking permission of self-love [i.e. self-interested desire]; as laid upon us by ourselves, it is a consequence of our will, and has from the first point of view an analogy with fear, and from the second with inclination" (p. 9).

Question: How can we capture the other feature of respect mentioned here: the idea that we "lay the law upon ourselves"? Do we legislate the law of modus ponens for ourselves?

7. The Categorical Imperative

The Categorical Imperative (1st Formulation): "I ought never to conduct myself except so that I could also will that my maxim become a universal law."

<u>The Initial Derivation of the Categorical Imperative</u>:
(1) The only unconditionally good thing is the good will.
(2) The good will consists in acting from duty.
(3) Acting from duty consists in acting not from inclination or desire, but from respect for the moral law.
(4) With the exception of the categorical imperative, every practical policy (or maxim) is capable of being an object of desire or inclination. The categorical imperative is the only purely formal practical guide; it has no empirical content—no other possible end (or determination of the will) is like that.
Therefore,
(5) The only unconditionally good thing is acting in accordance with the categorical imperative.

What does (4) mean? "But what kind of law can it be, whose representation, without even taking account of the effect expected from it, must determine the will, so that it can be called good absolutely and without inclination? Since I have robbed the will of every impulse that could have arisen from the obedience to any [particular] law, there is nothing left over except the universal lawfulness of the action in general which alone is to serve the will as its principle. . ." (p. 18).

If one is acting from moral duty alone in choosing some policy, then the idea that the policy is a moral one has to be one's reason for choosing to apply the policy. Now if one has no further aim or end when choosing the policy, the moral value of the policy must be an intrinsic, non-instrumental feature of it. What intrinsic, non-instrumental moral value could a policy have? (The feature has to be entirely formal—it won't be anything about the goodness, or pleasure or happiness brought about by adopting the policy, because those features are extrinsic and instrumental.) The intrinsic, non-instrumental moral value a policy must have is its **generality** or **universality**—this is the summum bonum of principles, and the very feature codified by the first version of the categorical imperative.

8. Hypothetical vs. Categorical Imperatives ". . . all imperatives are formulas of the determination of action, which is necessary in accordance with the principle of a will which is good in some way. Now if the action were

good merely as a means to something else, then the imperative is hypothetical; if it is represented as good in itself, hence necessary, as the principle of the will, in a will that in itself accords with reason, then it is categorical" (p. 31).

First definitions:

(1) A **hypothetical imperative** is an imperative of the form "Do X so as to achieve Y."
(2) A **categorical imperative** is an imperative of the form "Do X."

Examples of hypothetical imperatives: "Exercise so as to maintain your health." "Invest your money so as to increase your wealth." "Lie cunningly so as not to get caught."

Second definitions:

(1') A **hypothetical imperative** is an imperative of the form "Do X if you want to Y."
(2') A **categorical imperative** is an imperative of the form "Do X (regardless of what you want)."

Examples of hypothetical imperatives (so defined): "Exercise if you want to maintain your health." "Invest your money if you want to increase your wealth." Example? "Lie cunningly if you want to get away with it."

9. Three Classes of Imperative

Rules of Skill: Hypothetical imperatives that cite an end other that happiness.
Examples: "Exercise so as to maintain your health." "Take cyanide so as to kill yourself."
Counsels of Prudence: Hypothetical imperatives that have happiness as their end.
Examples: "Make friends so as to be happy." "Engage in pleasurable activities so as to be happy."

Kant claims that we (humans) necessarily have happiness as our aim. So every human is bound by counsels of prudence. That is, counsels of prudence apply to us all; we should all follow them given that we have happiness as our end. But this is just a fact about human nature. Categorical imperatives don't just bind every human being; they bind every rational creature. And they don't just bind every rational creature because all rational creatures happen to share a common aim, end or goal. Instead, categorical imperatives apply to all rational creatures regardless of what their particular ends happen to be. "There is one imperative that, without being grounded on any other aim to be achieved through a certain course of conduct as its condition, commands this conduct immediately. The imperative is **categorical**. It has to do not with the matter of the action and what is to result from it, but with the form and the principle from which it results; and what is essentially good about it consists in the disposition, whatever its results may be. This imperative may be called that **of morality**" (p. 33).

Commands of Morality: Categorical Imperatives which do not specify a means to an end, but instead represent a way of willing or deciding what to do—where deciding what to do in this way (or being disposed to decide in this particular way) **is identical with** having a good will.

9b. Kant's question: How are all these imperatives possible?

What does this question mean? One possibility is that Kant is asking whether we are capable of acting from duty alone. Is it possible and can we know that it is possible for humankind to act morally from considerations of fairness or justice rather than self-interest, love or benevolent emotion. This question is taken up in the final section of the Groundwork.

Another question that Kant might have in mind here (or elsewhere in the Groundwork) is, "What **makes it true** that we ought to do what each of these imperatives tells us to do?" What *makes it true* that we ought to seize upon opportunities to achieve our goals? What *makes it true* that we ought to deliberate about what to do in a moral way?

(a) Imperatives of Skill: It is *analytically* true that we ought to follow these.

"Whoever wills the end, also wills the means (insofar as has decisive influence on his actions) the means that are indispensably necessary to it that are in his control. As far as volition is concerned, this proposition is analytic. . ." (p. 34).

What would you say to someone who said, "I've decided to become a healthier person. I know that I must exercise to get healthy. But I've decided not to exercise." Kant says that this person is irrational; if she has really decided to become a healthier person, and she really knows that exercising is necessary for this, then she **must** decide to exercise. This follows from the very concepts we associate with 'decision', 'means', 'end' and 'rational'.

(b) Imperatives of Prudence: It also analytically true that we ought to follow these imperatives when they are determinate, but it is hard to come up with a precise imperative of prudence, because it is hard to figure out how to best achieve happiness. Imperatives of Prudence therefore reduce, in practice, to imperatives of skill.

(c) The Categorical Imperative: It is *synthetically* true that we are bound by this. But it can be known a priori. (Kant thinks the truths of geometry are like this too—they are synthetic a priori.) It is analytically true that the good will acts on the categorical imperative. It is synthetically true (but a priori knowable) that we ought to display good wills by acting on the categorical imperative.

10. First Formulations of the Supreme Principle of Morality

The Categorical Imperative (**Universal Law Formulation**): "Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become universal law."

The Categorical Imperative (**Natural Law Formulation**): "So act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature."

Kant makes it clear that he is not arguing for the claim that this is the supreme principle of morality by discussing cases in which one applies the categorical imperative to see whether a person's decisions or motives are morally justified. (We don't need empirical proof of this kind that we ought to act on the Categorical Imperative.) But he does think we can get a better grasp of the meaning of the categorical imperative by looking at particular examples.

Second example: Lying Promises.

(a) "Would I be content with things if my maxim (of getting myself out of embarrassment through an untruthful promise) should be valid as universal law (for myself as well as others), and would I be able to say to myself that anyone may make an untruthful promise when he finds himself in embarrassment which he cannot get out of in any other way? Then I soon become aware that I can will the lie but not at all a universal law to lie; for in accordance with such a law there would properly be no promises, because it would be pointless to avow my will in regard to future actions to those who would not believe this avowal, or, if they rashly did so, would pay me back in the same coin; hence my maxim, as soon as it were made into a universal law, would destroy itself" (pp. 18-19).

(b) "For the universality of a law that everyone who believes himself to be in distress could promise whatever occurred to him with the intention of not keeping it would make impossible the promise and the end one might have in making it, since no one would believe anything has been promised him, but rather would laugh about every such utterance as vain pretense" (p. 39).

First Example: Suicide

Consider the maxim, "From Self love, I make it my principle, I make it my principle to shorten my life when by longer term it threatens more ill than it promises agreeableness." . . ."One soon sees that a nature whose law it was to destroy life through the same feeling whose vocation is to impel the furtherance of life would contradict itself, and thus could not subsist as nature; hence the maxim could not possibly obtain as a universal law of nature, and consequently it entirely contradicts the supreme principle of all duty" (pp. 38-9).

Third Example: Laziness

"although a nature could still subsist in accordance with a universal law [which says 'indulge in gratification rather than trouble yourself with the expansion and improvement of your talents'], though then the human being (like the South Sea Islanders) would think only of letting his talents rust and applying his life to mere idleness, amusement, procreation, in a word, enjoyment; yet it is impossible for him to will that this should become a universal law of nature, or that it should be implanted as a natural instinct. For as a rational being her necessarily wills that all the faculties in him should be developed, because they are serviceable and given to him for all kinds of possible aims" (pp. 39-40).

Fourth Example: Indifference

Suppose on decides on the following policy, "Let each be as happy as heaven wills, or as he can make himself, I will not take anything from him or even envy him; only I do not want to contribute to his welfare or to his assistance in distress!" "a will that resolved on this would conflict with itself, since the case would sometimes arise in which he needs the love and sympathetic participation of others, and where, through such a natural law arising from his own will, he would rob himself of all hope of assistance that he wishes for himself" (p. 40).

Question: Apply the universal law formulation of the categorical imperative to each of these four examples. How plausible is Kant's claim that the universal law formulation of the categorical imperative indicates: (a) that suicide to prevent future suffering is impermissible, (b) that lying to escape embarrassment or distress is impermissible, (c) that a general policy of laziness is impermissible, and (d) that indifference to the suffering of others is impermissible.

I'm not asking whether you think suicide, lying, laziness, and indifference are **actually** morally impermissible. I'm asking whether policies advocating such fail to be universalizable as natural law and, therefore, fail Kant's test for moral permissibility.

11. The Three Formulations of the Categorical Imperative

(a) **The Formula of Universal Law**: Only act in accordance with a maxim if you can at the same time will it as universal law.

(b) **The Formula of Humanity**: Only act so that you use humanity, whether in yourself or another, as an end (in itself), and never merely as a means.

(c) **The Formula of Autonomy**: Only act in accordance with maxims that would be enacted into law by a legislator and member [i.e. citizen] of a realm of ends.

12. The Universalizability Test

Maxim 1: Make false promises to get money.
Maxim 2: Kill everyone who creates a nuisance.

One might argue that Maxim 1 *cannot* be willed as universal law because a world in which everyone obeys maxim 1 is a world in which *everyone* issues false promises to get money. If I'm in this world and I try to issue a false promise, I won't succeed.

Kant would have you suppose that you are the one responsible for the fact that everyone follows maxim 1. (Perhaps you are the creator of this world and you make it the case that everyone in it must follow maxim 1.) Suppose that while you're responsible for everyone following maxim 1, you're also trying to get money by making a false promise. Is what you're doing **inconsistent**?

(a) One possibility is that it is *literally impossible* to issue a false promise in the world that you've created, because there are no promises in this world. To say that there are no promises in this world is to say that when the world contains a certain crucial amount of deceit, there can be no promises.

If you're the one who is keeping Maxim 1 in force in this world (if you're *willing it as universal law*) **and** you're also trying to get money by lying, then you're trying to achieve some goal **while** making that goal impossible to achieve; and that's inconsistent in a fairly straightforward sense.

(b) Another possibility is that it's not impossible to issue a promise in this world because some people would still be gullible. Still, by keeping Maxim 1 in force in this world you **undercut** your own attempt to make money off a lie. Remember that Kant's already concluded that insofar as you are rational you couldn't will an end without willing the (known) means to that end. So you would be irrational to attempt to get money by lying without doing what you can to make this **likely**. You can only make it **likely** that people will buy your false promises by getting rid of maxim 1. So you cannot rationally will that Maxim 1 be a law of nature and (at the same time) will that you get money by making the false promise.

13. Problems w/ the Universal Law Formulation

(a) Too weak: It seems that maxims 3 & 4 would pass the test imposed by the first formula of the categorical imperatives. But to act on either one of these maxims would obviously be immoral.

Maxim 3: Lie to those who are too stupid to realize it whenever you can make money by doing so.
Maxim 4: Kill the Gypsies, Jews and Communists as long as you are powerful enough to get away with it.

(b) Too strong: It seems that Maxims 5 & 6 would not pass the categorical imperative test, but it seems fine to act on them.

Maxim 5: Go to every UCSB basketball game to route for your team.
Maxim 6: Eat at the UCEN everyday for lunch.

Question: Can Kant show how the first formulation of the categorical imperative when properly interpreted rules out (as immoral) Maxims 3 and 4, and allows (as morally permissible) maxims 5 & 6?

14. The Formula of Humanity: "Only act so that you use humanity, whether in yourself or another, as an end (in itself), and never merely as a means." What does this mean? According to Kant, humanity is one of three principle characteristics of human beings. (The others are animality and personality.)

Humanity is the ability to set goals, utilize the means to achieve these goals and organize these means and goals into a coherent whole. So to treat humanity merely as a means is to undercut one's own or someone else's ability to set goals, utilize the means towards achieving these goals or organize their goals into a coherent whole.

* Distinguish: treating humanity *merely* as a means from treating it as *both* a means and an end.
* Apply the formulation of humanity version of the categorical imperative to the four examples Kant discusses.

15. The Formula of Autonomy "Only act in accordance with maxims that would be enacted into law by a legislator and member [i.e. citizen] of a realm of ends." There are three aspects to this formulation:

The First Aspect of the Formula of Autonomy: The idea of moral maxims or laws that must be obeyed by those who enact them. This is captured by Kant's idea that we must regard ourselves as both legislator for and member of the realm of ends. This idea answers to the universalizability condition imposed by the first formulation of the categorical imperative.

Question: Why is it important that legislators live under the laws they enact and that these laws do not contain exceptions for those who make them?

The Second Aspect of the Formula of Autonomy: The idea of a realm of **ends**. This is captured by Kant's idea that the legislators must regard themselves as making and living under laws suitable for beings that are intrinsically and unconditionally valuable in virtue of possessing humanity (where, if you recall, humanity is the pre-condition for all value).

What does it mean to say that humanity is the pre-condition for all value?

Argument
(1) The only thing with unconditional value is the good will.
(2) One cannot have a good will without having a will.
(3) One cannot have a will without possessing humanity.
Therefore,
(5) There is no unconditional value without humanity.

Corollary:
(6) Everything with conditional value **receives** its value from something with unconditional value.
Therefore,
(7) If there is nothing with unconditional value, then there is nothing with value.
Therefore,
(8) Without humanity, nothing has value.

On Premise (3): Remember that humanity is the capacity to set goals and work towards them. Kant can plausibly argue that without this capacity one cannot decide to do things and perform actions in the fullest sense. That is, Kant might distinguish human actions from reflexes, habits, and the instinctive fulfillment of drives by saying that human actions arise from **will**, while behavior of these other kinds arises from **mere desire**. (Kant would allow that some willed actions will serve desire—indeed, he suggests that for all we know *every* human action that has actually been performed has served desire. But these willed actions, which serve desire, are different from brute behavior because they don't arise **simply** from desire. They are instead mediated by "means/ends" reasoning of some form.)

> A theoretical regress stopper is a reason R for believing something P where one doesn't need a reason to believe R distinct from R itself.
>
> A practical regress stopper is a reason R for making a decision D where one does not need a reason for valuing R or deciding on R distinct from R itself.

On premise (6): Kant regards humanity as a regress stopper. He, unlike Mill, thinks happiness cannot be a regress stopper because though it has *intrinsic value* it does not have *unconditioned value*.

This brings us back to the second formulation of the categorical imperative. Kant expands on his idea that humanity is of unconditioned value and so is always to be treated as en end. In developing the third formulation of the categorical imperative he does a better job of explaining what "unconditioned value" is supposed to mean.

Dignity vs. **Price**: two different kinds of value.

Things that have a price either have a **market price** or a **fancy price**.

Market price: X has market price if and only if X has merely instrumental value or merely instrumental value and fancy price.

Fancy price: X has fancy price if and only if X has intrinsic value, but X is only intrinsically valuable because of our desires, inclinations or what Kant calls our "sensible nature."

Dignity: X has **dignity** if and only if X has intrinsic value and X would have intrinsic value no matter how different our sensible natures happened to be.

(Something has dignity if it has intrinsic value, and it would still have had this value even if we had evolved and developed culturally in an incredibly different fashion.)

What follows from the fact that creatures with humanity have something that deserves dignity? Kant thinks that this means that we cannot interfere with others or hinder their legitimate projects in anyway for the sake of happiness, even if we have their happiness in mind. Why not? Because humanity has more value than happiness—humanity has value of a completely different (and better) kind (i.e. dignity). So we can only interfere with humanity to preserve humanity.

Questions: What would Kant say about Jim the botanist? Would Jim's killing the one Indian to save the others amount to treating humanity in another merely as a means? Why or why not?

The Third Aspect of the Formula of Autonomy: This is the aspect of the third version of the categorical imperative that makes its first appearance here: it's the idea of our **legislating** or bringing morality into existence by making and living under laws. This is why the law is called "the principle of autonomy." 'Autonomy' means self-governance, self-rule, self-control, and independence. Kant has us giving ourselves the moral law because he wants to argue that it is through being moral that we can be best realize or achieve our freedom. The capacity to act morally distinguishes us from other physical things—things which are determined to behave as they do by the laws of physics and the past state of the universe. We needn't act in a pre-determined way because we can do what we know to be right even when the past would otherwise determine that we fail to do what is right.

A discussion of this subject matter takes place in the final section of the *Groundwork*, but (sadly) we will not have a chance to address it fully. But make sure you realize that Kant does not think we can give ourselves just any old morality. According to Kant, if one is to truly legislate a morality one must treat humanity in oneself and others as an end. As we have seen, this rules out lots of possible "maxims" or laws. The idea is that we have the freedom one could only have by living under laws of one's own making, but the laws have the kind of objectivity or validity that comes from their being the products of pure reason. It would be irrational to produce any other set of moral laws; so though we **create** these particular moral laws, they are (if arrived at in the right way) **uniquely valid**.